László Bíró

YUGOSLAV INTEGRATION AND MACEDONIA(1918–1939)

Abstract:

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had to face a huge challenge: integrating the different parts, regions and systems and organising them into a unified country. Among the different areas of the new state, compared to each other, some were very poor while others somewhat more prosperous. The unification of institutions and systems was successful, but the socio-economic differences were not successfully reduced. Macedonia remained one of the most underdeveloped areas of Yugoslavia. Macedonia's situation was determined mainly by the fact that the region was annexed to Serbia after the Balkan Wars. The region constituted a real borderland, surrounded by countries with territorial claims and active propaganda. During the entire period between the wars, this region was not represented by local politicians in the parliament, and locals were hardly appointed for higher positions in the public administration in spite of the development. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia failed to acquire a unified national identity; neither the one nation with three names and tribes nor the "integral" Yugoslavism after 1929 managed to imbue the masses of people with such an identity. The national identity remained unattained, as loyalty towards Yugoslavia did not strengthen. The Serbs wanted the inhabitants of Macedonia to assimilate the Serbian national consciousness. But they did not have the facilities to develop culture in the region and attract the local population. Macedonians simply did not want to acquire the Serbian national consciousness.

Key words: unification, integration, national consciousness, economic disparities, economic grow, education, demographic processes

After World War I, the great Eastern European empires collapsed, and new states were established, such as Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia.[1] The new countries were comprised of parts that had previously belonged to different empires. On 1 December 1918 the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was proclaimed. The new state included seven different regions, which had been either sovereign states (Serbia and Montenegro) or parts of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. 57.5% of the country's territory had previously belonged

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to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: Croatia, Dalmatia, Slovenia, Vojvodina, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (the last one had belonged there since 1878). Serbia's pre-1914 territory, expanded as a result of the Balkan Wars, accounted for 38.5% of the new state.[2] Earlier there had been very few connections between the different parts of the new state, in fact, in many cases there was no connection at all. The regions of the new state had different levels of social, economic and cultural development. They had different experience and traditions in political life, along with different institutions and institutional systems (for example, differing economic, political, judicial and educational systems). The new state had to face a huge challenge: integrating the different parts, regions and systems and organising them into a unified country. This work took place on several levels.

Social situation: one country, several regions

After World War I, several new states were established in Europe, but the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had the largest differences of all in terms of development (or, even if there were similarly large differences, none of the states was comprised of so many different regions).[3] Various comparative historians highlighted the fact that the regions that ended up constituting the southern Slavic state had previously belonged to different historical regions or to different subregions of the same region (Eastern Europe). Boundaries were basically drawn between the Slovenian, Croatian and Vojvodinan areas, on the one hand, and Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other hand. Among the different areas of the new state, compared to each other, some were very poor while others somewhat more prosperous. The economic performance and economic structure of these regions and, therefore, the living conditions of their population showed significant disparities (see Table 1).[4] As you can judge from the data: The territories that had previously belonged to the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy produced more income than the rest of the regions.

[2] The state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had a territory of 248,987 sq km. The territory of the different areas was as follows: Serbia 95,667 sq km (pre-1912 Serbia 49,950 sq km and Southern Serbia 45,717 sq km), Montenegro 9,668 sq km, Bosnia and Herzegovina 51,199 sq km, Dalmatia 12,732 sq km, Slovenia and Prekmurje 16,197 sq km, Croatia 43,822 sq km, and Vojvodina 19,702 sq km, V. M Đuričić, M. B. Tošić, A. Vegner, et al., *Naša narodna privreda i nacionalni prihod,* Sarajevo 1929. p. 30.

[3] For detailed information on regional differences and the Yugoslav integration, see: László Bíró, *A jugoszláv állam, 1918–1939*, Budapest 2010.

[4] Aleksandar Jakir, *Dalmatien zwischen den Weltkriegen. Agrarische und urbane Lebenswelt und das Scheitern der jugoslawischen Integration,* München 1999, pp. 141–142.

Table 1
Ratio (%) of per capita national income by regions compared to the Yugoslav average, 1923

Region	Agriculture	Industry	Other	Total
Slovenia	90.8	317.3	177.1	160.5
Vojvodina	175.5	107.7	125.7	146.0
Croatia	120.2	123.0	141.5	128.3
Dalmatia	74.7	180.9	94.0	99.8
Serbia	88.1	45.6	70.4	74.5
Bosnia and Herzegovina	72.0	71.3	62.4	68.4
Southern Serbia	71.0	6.1	49.3	52.2
Montenegro	46.7	3.2	32.2	34.1
Kingdom of SCS	100	100	100	100

When discussing social differences, first of all, I wish to point out the demographic factors. According to demographers, in traditional societies people get married at an earlier age than in more modern communities. In traditional societies you can barely find single women above the age of 25 while in more modern communities unmarried women of 30 or so are significantly more common to find. In this respect, demographers have drawn a dividing line between Trieste and Saint Petersburg, with more traditional societies to the east from this line. Such a dividing line can also be defined within Yugoslavia. According to census data of 1931, the proportion of unmarried people was higher in the northern part of the country (Slovenia, Croatia and Dalmatia). Thus, this example highlights the existence of significant social differences between the regions and nations of Yugoslavia (see Table 2).[5]

Table 2
Ratio of unmarried men and women per age groups by banovinas, 1931

Banovina	15–19		20–24		25–29		30–34		35–39	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Drava	99.6	97.4	91.2	76.3	58.9	47.6	30.9	31.6	14.9	26.9
Sava	94.9	80.7	63.7	39.1	27.6	18.9	13.3	12.8	9.9	10.9
Littoral	97.6	91.8	79.2	53.6	40.1	25.8	16.7	12.3	10.0	9.5
Danube	92.3	79.5	53.7	28.2	17.9	9.2	8.5	5.4	5.6	4.0
Vrbas	91.1	75.0	53.8	19.8	19.2	6.0	8.3	3.3	5.4	2.5
Drina	91.6	78.6	59.0	25.9	21.5	7.7	9.4	4.2	6.2	3.1
Morava	77.6	74.7	33.7	17.6	10.2	4.2	4.7	2.3	3.1	1.6
Zeta	94.4	86.8	75.0	41.2	43.3	16.1	21.2	8.5	11.4	6.1
Vardar	85.2	78.2	47.1	23.5	19.0	4.3	8.4	1.9	4.6	1.2
Belgrade	98.4	90.0	80.9	55.4	51.4	28.6	28.0	16.7	17.3	11.3
Yugoslavia	91.6	81.8	60.5	34.9	26.6	14.9	12.8	9.2	8.3	7.6

[5] *Statistički Godišnjak*, 6 / 1936, pp. 45–49.

As a consequence of demographic processes, the population of Yugoslavia increased by 29.3% from 11,984,911 to 15,490,000 (an increase of 3.5 million persons) from 1921 to 1939 (the data for 1939 are based on official estimates). However, the population of the different regions increased in different degrees. In proportion, the Yugoslavian population increase was one of the largest in Europe, with only Albania and Greece registering a bigger growth.[6] As a consequence of several factors, during the twenty years of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia the population of the different regions grew to different extent. The smallest increase was recorded in the north and northwest while in the south there was a population explosion of 150–200% of the Yugoslav average. A larger increase exceeding the national average took place in the southern areas that were less developed economically and culturally, while the largest population increase was recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Kosovo. The population increase was still, first of all, a consequence of high birth rates in the southern parts of the country. In the regions with more developed industry and agriculture, as a result of demographic changes that had taken place earlier, the population increased to a significantly smaller extent (in Croatia by 17.1%, in Vojvodina by 19%, in Slovenia by 19.9%, in Serbia by 26.2%, in Montenegro by 39.6, in Macedonia by 42.9, in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 46.1%, and in Kosovo by 69.7%).[7] The natural population increase was mainly a consequence of high birth rates. The number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age (15 to 49 years) was 170 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 167 in Macedonia, and 162 in Kosovo. This ratio approximately equalled the national average (132) in Serbia (136) and Montenegro (131), while it was lower in Croatia (118), Slovenia (104) and Vojvodina (101).[8]

This leads to the conclusion that the demographic revolution, i.e. sharply decreasing birth rates and increasing life expectancy, which in the majority of Europe took place in the second half of the 19th century, in some Southern Slavic regions still had not taken place by the first half of the 20th century. Notwithstanding a decreasing trend, the southern regions continued recording high birth and death rates. Birth and death rates in Slovenia, Vojvodina and Croatia were similar to the data of Central European states while those of the rest of the country were closer to such rates recorded in Southern Europe and the Balkans.[9] The Yugoslav society was young. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia constituted the "younger regions" with 37–40% of the population belonging to the age group of 0–14, and only 3–6% being over 65. (Such ratios in the regions of Slovenia, Croatia

[6] Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasant, politics and economic change in Yugoslavia*, Standford–London 1955, pp. 288–289.

[7] *Statistički Godišnjak*, 5 / 1935, pp. 40–41., Vladimir Simeunović, *Stanovništvo Jugoslavije i socijalističkih republika 1921–1961*, Beograd 1964, pp. 30–32., p. 40.

[8] Simeunović, *Stanovništvo ...* , p. 44.

[9] Brian R. Mitchell, *European historical statistics 1750–1975,* London 1980, pp. 124–130.

and Vojvodina were 30–32% and 6–7%, respectively.)[10] Large generations had to be brought up and educated, the members of which would soon enter the labour market as job seekers. The Yugoslav state, however, was unable to establish a school system capable of guaranteeing schooling for all the children, and, later on, job opportunities were also scarce.

75% of the Yugoslav population lived of agriculture. During the life of the Yugoslav state, there was no significant change in the employment structure. The agriculture preserved its predominant role within the employment structure of the country, although with some regional differences (see Table 3).[11] The proportion of agricultural workers decreased very slowly (from 1921 to 1931 it fell from 80.4% to 76.3%), and little increase was recorded in the proportion of workers in the industrial (8.6% to 10.7%), trade (2% to 2.3%) and transportation sectors (1.2% to 1.5%). A relatively faster increase took place only in the economically more developed regions, such as Slovenia. In the southern regions and Serbia (except for Belgrade and some industrial areas developed partly in the 1930s), agricultural production was the only source of income for the population even if large parts of the land were not suitable for agricultural production. In these parts of the country, the proportion of industrial workers, craftsmen and employees of the transportation sector was less than half of such proportion in Croatia and Vojvodina.

Table 3
The active population by employment areas, 1931 (%)

Region	Agriculture	Industry	Trade	Public services	Other
Slovenia	60.6	21.1	5.7	4.9	7.7
Croatia	76.3	10.7	4.3	4.2	4.5
Vojvodina	69.2	15.2	5.7	5.2	4.7
Serbia	79.3	8.9	3.4	4.5	3.9
Montenegro	78.1	5.8	3.0	8.3	4.8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	84.1	6.7	3.1	3.6	2.5
Macedonia	75.1	9.4	4.1	7.0	4.4
Kosovo	85.8	4.9	2.2	3.9	3.2
Sandžak	89.3	3.9	1.9	2.5	2.4

Political and administrative institutions

There were not only social differences between the different parts of the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes but their political institutions and traditions were also different. The political system of the Yugoslav state was established within

[10] Veljko Rogić, *Regionalna geografija Jugoslavije*, Zagreb 1990, p. 83.
[11] Mijo Mirković, *Ekonomska historija Jugoslavije*, Zagreb 1968, p. 308., See: *Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 31. marta 1931. godine,* vol. 4, Beograd 1940, IX., Momčilo Isić, *Socijalna i agrarna struktura Srbije u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji (Prema popisu stanovnišva od 31. marta 1931. godine)*, Beograd 1999, p. 11.

a couple of years of the creation of the new state. A common parliamentary body and a unified government and public administration were established, and the common army was also formed based on the Serbian army. Some time later the judicial systems were also unified. Harmonisation failed only in the field of civil law.

The issue of domestic political order was determined by the 1921 constitution (*Vidovdanski ustav)*. It was the achievement of Serbian parties that the constitution was adopted not by qualified but only simple majority. During the debate they achieved that, apart from Serbian parties, the Bosnian and Muslim parties of Southern Serbia also voted for the constitution. The first constitution of the new kingdom did not recognize any autonomy, either territorial or ethnic.[12]

The restructuring of public administration was also decided by the constitution. The winning position was the one proposing the establishment of smaller administrative areas instead of larger territorial units with more extensive autonomy, based on some historical right (or ethnic borders). After the reorganisation of state administration in 1922, the central power completely limited the districts' self-governance. Thus, a centralized and unitary political system was established. By 1924, even the remaining regional governments stopped working (in Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Vojvodina).[13]

Economy

After the establishment of the state, the primary task was the unification of the economic institutions. Organising the economic life and starting the integrating processes encouraged by the government required substantial efforts. One of the most important tasks was the establishment of the country's own currency system and the stabilisation of the national currency. Before World War I, the Southern Slavic regions basically belonged to one of two currency zones: the regions forming part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy used the crown as legal tender, while Serbia used dinar and Montenegro used Montenegrin perper. The introduction of the common currency was completed in 1921, not without political debates. The National Bank was created, the use of the dinar was extended to the entire country, its gold cover and convertibility were guaranteed, and the use of other currencies was prohibited.[14]

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[12] Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament i političke stranke u Jugoslaviji 1919–1929*. Beograd 1979, pp. 89–114., Stevan Sagadin, "Ustrojstvo naše države: Kralj, Narodna skupština, Državna uprava, Državno činovništvo", *Jubilarni zbornik života i rada Srba Hrvata i Slovenaca 1918–1928,* vol. I. Beograd 1928, pp. 72–113., Josip Hohnjec, "O ustavi naše države", *Slovenci v desetletju 1918–1928, Zbornik razprav iz kulturne, gospodarske in politične zgodovine* (Editor Josip Mal), Ljubljana 1928, pp. 295–338., *Ustavi i vlade Kneževine Srbije, Kraljevine SHS i Kraljevine Jugoslavije (1835–1941* (Editor Dušan Mrđenović), Beograd 1988, pp. 209–229.

[13] *Ustavi i vlade*, pp. 221–222.

[14] Ivan Slokar: "Valutne razmere, devizna politika in bankarstvo", *Slovenci v desetletju 1918–1928* ..., p. 553., Miograd Ugričić, *Novačni sistem Jugoslavije*. Beograd 1967, p. 95.

In 1919, the ministry of financial affairs was created, and in the following two years numerous laws and decrees regulating duties, state monopolies, use taxes and customs were adopted. The laws were based on former Serbian decrees, and most often the process began by simply extending the laws in force in the Kingdom of Serbia to the entire country. The system of state revenues and expenditures was organised by the mid-1920s, and the unification of direct taxes completed the establishment of the fiscal system. Unified customs tariffs were introduced in 1925.

The slowest and politically most debated part of the organisation of state revenues was the unification of direct taxes. 1918 saw five different direct tax systems in force in the territory of the Southern Slavic state, which implied differing tax burdens in the different parts of the country. This heterogeneous fiscal system was in force for nearly ten years. The fiscal system was unified by the law on taxes adopted on 8 February 1928. The law determined the types of taxes (land tax, property rental tax, corporate profit tax, interest tax, income tax, bachelor tax) and the way to calculate the tax base.[15]

Table 4
Direct taxes, use tax and duties per banovinas, 1939

Banovina	Direct taxes	Taxes and duties	Direct taxes	Taxes and duties
	Total		Per capita	
Drava	323,546,287	411,603,267	270	336
Sava	539,619,616	779,116,811	185	267
Danube	521,878,477	1,056,868,038	206	417
Littoral	58,936,467	73,601,132	61	76
Morava	116,215,387	195,660,335	71	119
Drina	142,235,535	178,504,685	78	98
Vrbas	43,689,735	108,545,321	36	91
Zeta	56,858,001	66,690,442	54	64
Vardar	89,930,027	103,282,144	51	57
Belgrade	449,911,913	717,405,233	110	765
Yugoslavia	2,351,821,445	3,691,277,408	152	238

In the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia the question of which part of the country, which nation had the highest tax burden was an ever topical political issue and cause for debate. There is no way to do justice but the available data show that during the whole period of Yugoslavia the parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy paid the largest amount of tax. From 1919 to 1929 the direct tax per capita in Vojvodina and Slovenia could easily amount to 3 to 5 times the direct

[15] Vladimir Murko, **"**Državne in samoupravne finance v dravski banovini v l. 1918–1938**"**, *Spominski zbornik Slovenije, Ob dvajsetletnici Kraljevine Jugoslavije* (Editor Jože Lavrič, Josip Mal, France Stele), Ljubljana, 1939, pp. 474–476., Vladimír Murko, *Systém jihoslovanských přímých daní*, Bratislava 1938.

tax paid in the southern parts of the country, while Croats paid more than 1.5 times as much as Serbs. The unified fiscal system did not bring about substantial changes, as shown by the data published in the Statistical Year Book (see Table 4).[16]

There is no real reason for assuming political motivation behind the tax imposition, although the government must have had some reason for delaying the tax unification until 1929 and letting the regions of the former Monarchy pay higher taxes. The degree of tax payment also reveals the differences in development between the different regions.

Education

After the establishment of the Yugoslav state, there were huge disparities also in the fields of education and culture. In 1918, there were five different laws in force on primary education. A unified educational system would have been necessary for various reasons: an efficient educational policy could have reduced the educational differences between the various parts of the country, and the curriculum drawn up in the spirit of Yugoslavism could have brought the Southern Slavic nations closer to each other, which could have strengthened their loyalty towards the newly founded state.[17]

Before 1918, the cultural life of some Southern Slavic nations was directed from various centres (Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Novi Sad and Split). The state centralisation started in the 1920s also reached the fields of education and culture. The centralisation of educational and cultural affairs under the supervision of a common ministry was finished after the withdrawal of local government rights and duties, the introduction of the new public administration and the cancellation of regional governments (1923–1924), that is, five years after the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The first educational programme, which never came into force, was only drawn up by December 1927. [18] The restructuring and development of the school system did not appear to be an easy task. There were two basically opposing concepts regarding the organisation of the education. The unitarian concept aiming for the establishment of a unified school system was based on the idea that a unified school system was the most efficient means to educate the young generation in the spirit of the new state ideology. The political unity of one nation with three names and tribes was already expressed by the establishment of the common state, thus, according to the advocates of the unitarian approach, the remaining economic and cultural differences could be eliminated, among others, by breaking down cultural barriers and more specifically by means of a unified

[16] *Statistički Godišnjak,* 10 / 1940, p. 467.

[17] Ljubodrag Dimić, "Kulturna politika i modernizacija jugoslovenskog društva 1918–1941, Mogućnosti i ograničenja", *Srbija u modernizacijskim procesima XX. veka* (Editors Latinka Perović, Marija Obradović, Dubravka Stojanović), Beograd 1994, pp. 193–194.

[18] Ljubodrag Dimić, *Kulturna politika u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji 1918–1941*, vol. I, *Društvo i država*, Beograd 1996, pp. 184–189.

school education. The opposing approach would stick to the traditions and claims of the different areas, and would claim more flexibility in the solution of practical issues.[19] The conflict of the two opposing concepts, just like the issue of the country's new structure, was decided by the Vidovdan Constitution. It provided for education "under identical circumstances" in the entire country.[20]

Although during the years several draft laws were prepared, the laws enacting the unified school system were only adopted ten years later. The first law to be adopted was the one on secondary education, on 31 August 1929. The act on public elementary schools, which affected the largest number of people and thus can be considered the most important act, was adopted on 5 December 1929. It declared that the objective of education was to educate children in the spirit of national and state unity and religious tolerance. Education was universal, free and compulsory for all in the entire country. The state had the right to oblige parents to send their children to school. (This was especially important as 30% of children of school age did not attend school.) The law prescribed eight years of compulsory education. Article 17 also aimed at smoothing out disparities within the country by ordaining the establishment of schools in all areas with at least 30 children of school age within a 4 km range. The law also determined the 14 subjects to be taught in a uniform way all over the country. Furthermore, the law stipulated that the language of public elementary school education was the language of the state, i.e. Serbo-Croat-Slovenian. Schools were only allowed to employ teachers who graduated from state-run teacher training colleges and worked as state employees.[21] According to a recent researcher of Yugoslav cultural policy, this act combined the ideology of integral Yugoslavism with the modern educational policy objectives (or often simply desires and hopes) of smoothing out disparities of cultural levels within a short period of time. However, the ideas did not turn into practice; for example, compulsory education was not introduced in the entire country.[22]

The educational system had two main sources of financing: state and local government budgets. Local governments (villages, towns, and voivodeships) allotted 4 to 16% of their budget to education. The ministry of education, which also controlled the cultural and scientific institutions, allotted 75 to 90% of its budget to education, the 50 to 67% of which was dedicated to elementary schooling.[23] Taking into account the average costs of that period, these funds were insufficient for bringing about significant cultural development and enabling disadvantaged regions to start catching up. Due to the previously

[19] Vladeta Tešić, Milan Mirković, Srećko Ćunković, Rade Vuković, *Sto godina Prosvetnog saveta Srbije 1880–1980*, Beograd 1980. p. 89.
[20] *Ustavi i vlade*, p. 211.
[21] *Službene novine*, 9 December 1929.
[22] Ljubodrag Dimić, *Kulturna politika u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji 1918–1941,* vol. II, *Škola i crkva*, Beograd 1996, p. 134.
[23] Martin Mayer, *Elementarbildung in Jugoslawien (1918–1941). Ein Beitrag zur gesellschaftlichen Modernisierung?* München 1995, p. 95.

different development levels and the insufficient funds for smoothing out differences, significant regional disparities continued to exist regarding the school system and cultural development levels in Yugoslavia. In the north and northwest there were almost thrice as many schools per capita and almost four times as many schools per sq km as in the less developed south, i.e. in Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This situation could be attributed both to the previous educational policy and to geographical factors. In the mountain areas villages were smaller and could not afford maintaining their own schools. Between the two world wars, regional differences hardly changed in this respect (see Table 5):[24]

Table 5
Density of the elementary school network (1922–23 and 1938–39)

Region	1922–23		1938–39	
	Inhabitants per school	Sq km per school	Inhabitants per school	Sq km per school
Slovenia	1,288	25	1,404	24
Croatia	1,587	25	1,587	21
Dalmatia	1,193	24	1,256	22
Vojvodina	1,284	18	2,443	34
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,425	93	2,550	49
Serbia	1,685	32	1,823	23
South Serbia	1,941	60	1,714	38
Montenegro	694	34	918	37
Yugoslavia	1,679	34	1,718	28

Nevertheless, the proportion of children attending school increased in all parts of the country: the number of pupils in the academic year 1921–22 was 989,000 while in 1938–39 1,426,000. There were more schools but the overall number of places did not increase more than the number of children as a result of natural population increase. Illiteracy rates also fell but to a smaller extent than desired, and regional differences remained (see Table 6).[25] According to official statistics, illiteracy rates decreased by 5.9% from 1921 to 1931: from 51.5% to 44.6%, and later on, by 1944 to 38%.[26] In the age group of 11–24, i.e. pupils who began their studies in the Yugoslav state, illiteracy rates fell from

[24] *The same*, p. 100.
[25] *Statistički godišnjak*, 1 / 1929, pp. 70–71., 6 / 1934–35.
[26] Martin Mayer, *Elementarbildung* ... p. 205.

42% to 37%. Literacy rates within this age group equalled the number of children attending school.[27]

Table 6
Illiteracy rates per banovinas (1921, 1931)

Banovina	1921			1931		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Drava	8.9	8.9	8.9	5.26	5.79	5.54
Sava	25.7	40.1	31.1	19.57	35.15	27.67
Danube	24.5	43.0	34.1	17.52	39.56	28.87
Littoral	53.3	77.2	67.2	44.11	69.76	57.46
Vrbas	76.1	91.4	83.5	59.89	85.81	72.60
Drina	52.6	78.0	65.4	43.24	81.02	62.11
Morava	53.5	86.6	70.8	38.83	83.72	61.96
Zeta	59.5	86.8	73.5	48.80	82.90	66.04
Vardar	71.8	90.3	81.3	55.70	85.50	70.86
Belgrade	11.5	18.8	14.1	7.10	15.32	10.87
Yugoslavia	42.2	60.3	51.5	32.27	56.40	44.61

The results of the integration and Macedonia

Macedonia's situation was determined mainly by the fact that the region was annexed to Serbia after the Balkan Wars. Vardar Macedonia found itself in a new situation, as previously its main economic and political relations were with the south, with Thessaloniki being the economic centre of the region. Its links with Serbia were weaker. Local people did not consider themselves Serbs, thus they did not regard their coming to form part of the new state as a liberation. Serbia, however, considered the territories acquired in 1913 as Serbian territories, and extended the Serbian laws to the Macedonian areas as well.[28]

The Balkan Wars were followed by another war, World War I, after which an extremely complex state was established.[29] In terms of state organisation, in principle, the new state had different alternatives. 1. Full integration, which

[27] Literacy rates per banovinas: Drava 97.5% (men 97.5%, women 98.4%), Sava 83.0% (88.2%, 77.8%), Danube 80.5% (87.9%, 73.0%), Littoral 52.6% (64.9%, 40.5%), Drina 48.5% (66.1%, 29.8%), Morava 47.9% (69.9%, 25.3%), Zeta 45.3% (62.2%, 26.6%), Vardar 34.5% (52.4%, 25.0%), Vrbas 34.5% (48.2%, 20.4%), Belgrade 93.1% (93.4%, 92.7%). Yugoslavia 63.2% (74.1%, 52.0%). *Definitivni rezultati popisa stanovništva od 31. marta 1931. godine,* vol. III, Beograd 1939, p. 7.

[28] See Katrin Boeckh, *Von den Balkankriegen zum Ersten Weltkrieg. Kleinstaatenpolitik und ethnische Selbstbestimmung auf dem Balkan*, München 1996., Miroslav Svirčević, "The New Territories of Serbia after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913: The Establishment of the First Local Authorities", *Balkanica*, 44, 2014, pp. 285–306.

[29] The most comprehensive studies about Macedonia within Yugoslavia are the following: Nada Boškovska, *Das jugoslawische Makedonien 1918–1941. Eine Randregion zwischen Repression und Integration*, Wien, Köln, Weimar 2009., Vladan Jovanović, *Jugoslovenska država i Južna Srbija 1918–1929. Makedonija, Sandžak, Kosovo i Metohija u Kraljevini SHS*, Beograd 2002., Vladan Jovanović, *Vardarska banovina 1929–1941*, Beodrad 2011.

implied the necessity of creating unified institutions. This excluded any kind of autonomy. Supporters of this approach were of the opinion that after World War I a Yugoslav nation state was created, thus everyone in the country belonged to the same nation. 2. By contrast, the other option was a kind of decentralized state preserving certain forms of autonomous government. This implied that some policies, mostly cultural and social issues, would be handled at the local level. Only some policies would be the competence of the central government: foreign policy, trade, and defence.

As it is widely known, Yugoslavia's state structure was determined by the Constitution of 1920 as a centralized political system. Macedonian MPs voted for the Constitution, however, the MPs of the democratic and radical parties that obtained seats in the parliament were not local politicians but people appointed by the party headquarters in Serbia. MPs of the Muslim Džemijet were promised, in exchange for their votes, to be able to keep their estates in the course of the agrarian reforms. The antipathy towards the Yugoslav state was manifest in the fact that hardly more than half of the eligible voters went to the polls (the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation, VMRO called for a boycott) and the Communist Party received the largest number of votes (Communist Party 15, Democratic Party 11, Radical Party 6 seats).[30]

During the entire period in question, this region was not represented by local politicians in the parliament, and locals were hardly appointed for higher positions in the public administration.[31] It was not until the end of this period that a local elite, furthering the interest of the region, was formed. In other parts of the country, however, there were groups that managed to achieve certain results. The Slovenian People's Party (at times in opposition, other times in the government) managed to obtain the right to decide on various issues, especially cultural and social issues, affecting the Slovenian areas, and also succeeded in establishing a voivodeship for the Slovenian territories in 1929. Almost the entire Croatian population supported the Croatian Peasant Party, and, as a consequence of the state of foreign affairs and constant opposition, Croatia was given autonomy in 1939 (*sporazum*, Serb–Croat agreement, establishment of Banovina Hrvatska). The Serbian elite considered Macedonia to be Serbian land, therefore it would not give autonomy to Macedonia as it did to Croatia in 1939. In addition, since the population of this region was considered Serbian and these territories were annexed to Serbia before 1914, adjudicating minority rights, laid down in the peace treaties, to the Macedonian population was completely out of question.[32]

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[30] Branislav Gligorijević, *Parlament ... ,* p. 83.

[31] See Nadežda Cvetkovska, *Makedonskoto prašanje vo jugoslovenskiot parlament meģu dvete svetski vojni*, Skopje 2000., Nadežda Cvetkovska, *Političkite partii vo parlamentarnite izborni borbi vo vardarskiot del na Makedonija (1919–1929)*, Skopje 2004., Ivan Katardžiev, *Istorija na makedonskiot narod,* Tom 4, *Makedonija meģu Balkanskite i Vtorata svetska vojna (1912–1941),* Skopje 2000.

[32] Nada Boškovska, *Das jugoslawische ...* , pp. 361–364.

Nevertheless, Yugoslav authorities had to make enormous efforts to maintain peace in the region. A large part of the army and almost two thirds of the gendarmerie were stationed in Macedonia. The region constituted a real borderland, surrounded by countries with territorial claims and active propaganda. The population in the south of the country was not loyal to the Yugoslav state; in Kosovo it took years to put down the Albanian revolt, and the VMRO was ever active in organising anti-Yugoslav actions. The peaceful population did not like the officials coming from Belgrade and regarded the state power as an oppressive regime.[33]

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia failed to acquire a unified national identity; neither the one nation with three names and tribes nor the "integral" Yugoslavism after 1929 managed to imbue the masses of people with such an identity. The national identity remained unattained, as loyalty towards Yugoslavia did not strengthen, and indeed, it was the different national identities that became stronger. Macedonia was in a special situation. The Serbs wanted the inhabitants of Macedonia to assimilate the Serbian national consciousness. But they did not have the facilities to develop culture in the region and attract the local population. At the same time, Serbian soldiers and officials were very much disliked by Macedonian people. Local Macedonians simply did not want to acquire the Serbian national consciousness.

Apart from the political system, it was necessary to form a common economic, monetary and customs system and a unified system of national education. To put it simply, we can say that the unification was carried out in all areas, mostly by extending the Serbian institutional systems. In the 1920s, the common currency was introduced and the tax revenue system was organised. The unification finished by the beginning of the 1930s. The northern territories complained that they were paying much higher taxes than the southern ones. For Macedonia, the biggest disadvantage was that tobacco became state monopoly.

In 1918 various different regions, which often had very poor economic relations with each other, came to form part of the same country. While they belonged to the common state, significant changes took place in all the regions and also in the economic relations between them. It should be noted, first of all, that amongst the free market economy conditions investments focused on the previously developed areas. Therefore, industry went on developing in Slovenia and Croatia, and Belgrade became the centre of the banking system after the Great Depression. In the 1930s, Belgrade with its surroundings and certain Bosnian areas profited from the industrial projects. The food industry in Vojvodina and Croatia was in decline after having lost its markets in the Monarchy. In Macedonia, a larger number of firms were established compared to previous times, and the tobacco industry received the heaviest investments. The state played a significant role – 40% of the investments were made by the state. Investments in Macedonia were not considered profitable, therefore the

[33] Vladan Jovanović, "Vardarska banovina: Društveno-politička skica", *Istorija 20 veka*, 28 / 2010, No 1, p. 70.

amount of investments there was well below the amount in the more developed regions. Yet, in spite of the development, Macedonia remained one of the most underdeveloped areas of Yugoslavia.[34]

As we have seen, at the beginning of the 1930s new laws on education were adopted, which introduced compulsory schooling, and the education system was unified in the spirit of integral Yugoslavianism. New schools were built in every part of the country, but, in spite of the obligation, 40% of Macedonian children did not attend school in order to be able to work at home or in the fields instead. Pursuant to the law, the language in schools was "Serbo-Croatian" but children in Macedonia did not understand the state language properly. Many teachers were sent from other parts of Yugoslavia to Macedonia as a punishment (for them Macedonia was the Yugoslav Siberia). Thus, education was not effective. There were no schools with teaching in Albanian language, so Albanian children did not attend school at all. A large part of Macedonian people remained illiterate.

When dealing with such a complex country as Yugoslavia, governments have to be able to make appropriate and effective efforts to help disadvantaged regions catch up with the rest. During the first (royal) Yugoslavia little was done to align the economic level of the different regions. Here we should mention some important measures.

1) Only in 1938 was a special fund established from which the less developed regions could receive additional money (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Macedonia).[35] Only in the second half of the 1930s did prime minister Milan Stojadinović promise a development plan for the southern regions. In the 1930s, plans were drawn up for the development of Macedonia, improvement works (partly in order to stop the spread of malaria) and railway construction. However, rural development was very slow. In Macedonia the largest city, Skopje was developing the most rapidly. In the 1920s, major private investments began and in the 1930s communal and infrastructural constructions were going on with funding from the government and state banks.[36]

2) At this point we can mention some measures taken during the agrarian reform and colonisation, which contributed to the development of poorer regions. Approximately 20-22 thousand families (80-90 thousand people) moved to the south of the country, out of which approximately 4-6 thousand families moved to Macedonia (20 thousand people) and received land there. The government established new villages and settlements (more than 100 in Macedonia), built houses, wells, and schools. 3-4 times more funds were spent on a colonist in the

[34] Dančo Zografski, "Glavne faze, obeležja i dimenzije razvitka industrije u Makedoniji do kraja drugog svetskog rata", *Acta historico-oeconomica Iugoslaviae*, 1 / 1974, 123–139., Lazar Lazarov, *Opšestveno-ekonomskiot razvoj na NR Makedonija vo periodot na obnovata i industrijalizacijata (1944–1957),* Skopje 1988, pp. 21–86., Lidija Djurkovska, "Faktori za razvoj na stopanstvoto vo Skopje meǧu dvete svetski vojni", *Glasnik*, 56 / 2012, Nos 1–2, pp. 111–116.

[35] *Ministarstvo Financija Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1918–1938* (Editors Nikola Stanarević, Stevan Milačić, Mihail Milošević, et al.)*,* Beograd 1939, p. 182.

[36] Nada Boškovska, *Das jugoslawische ... ,* pp. 195–205.

south than in the north.[37] However, newcomers did not manage to become integrated in the Macedonian society as the local population considered them as strangers sent there with the purpose of serbianisation.

3) With the construction of railways the state sought to develop the less-developed areas and incorporate them into the transport system of the country. The main problem in the 1920s was that these railway lines mostly linked the regions with the former capitals, i.e. Vienna, Budapest, and Thessaloniki, and did not effectively help the communication between the different parts of Yugoslavia. So one of the most important tasks was the construction of the Belgrade–Zagreb line to facilitate transport links between the two largest cities in the country, as well as between Serbia and Croatia. During the first Yugoslavia, some lines were built in the mountainous regions of Macedonia, Bosnia and Kosovo. The railway lines constructed in Macedonia in this period are: till 1926 the line between Veles and Kočani (of military importance), in the 1930s the one between Veles and Bitola, and during World War I and after the World War a narrow gauge railroad between Skopje and Ohrid. However, the largest plan – the line between Belgrade and the Adriatic Sea – was never realized. Despite this, we can say that the new railway lines helped reduce regional disparities.[38]

To sum it up, the unification of institutions and systems was successful. On the other hand, the socio-economic differences were not successfully reduced. As a result of economic development, modernisation kept taking place in the regions that had come to form part of the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with a more developed social structure (except for Belgrade and its surroundings that gained the greatest advantage of becoming the centre of a bigger country). From a social point of view, the Yugoslav integration cannot be considered successful, although we have to acknowledge that time was often insufficient for smoothing out disparities and the factors facilitating the change were also missing. The governing authorities never showed understanding towards the viewpoints of the different regions and nations, such as the ever faster Macedonian national development. This latter led to the joy of many over the disintegration of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

[37] Bogdan Lekić, *Agrarna reforma i kolonizacija u Jugoslaviji 1918–1941*, Beograd 2002, pp. 463–474., Aleksandar Apostolov, *Kolonizacijata na Makedonija vo stara Jugoslavija*, Skopje 1989, pp. 160–161.

[38] Momčilo Ivanović, "Građenje železnica od 1918 do 1941 godine i građevinska politika u tome periodu", *Sto godina železnica Jugoslavije. Zbornik članaka povodom stogodišnjice železnica Jugoslavije* (Editor Blagovac Blagoje), Beograd 1951, pp. 129–136., Milan Lazić, "Investiciona politika Kraljevine Jugoslavije u železničkom i drumskom saobraćaju 1919–1941", *Jugoslovenska država 1918–1998* (Editor-in-Chief Đorđe O. Piljević), Beograd 1999, pp. 375–382.